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All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain natural and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness.

-- Article 1, Section 1, New Jersey State Constitution

A Warning about Freedom from Our Founders

By Jane Chastain

It is more important than ever to remember the events that led to our July 4 holiday: the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It's also important to remember the bravery and sacrifice made by the men who willingly put their lives on the line to sign it and those who gave their lives to defend it.

The British had increasingly oppressed the colonists, and sent a standing army to North America. Furthermore, it ruled that the colonists must provide this occupying force with living quarters and supplies. On April 19, 1775, war broke out when the Brits tried to seize the military supplies of the Massachusetts militia. On Aug. 23, 1775, King George officially declared the colonies in rebellion.

The men who signed the Declaration of Independence were not lawless men or reactionaries. They were men of means, highly educated, thoughtful men with much to lose. Many who signed this document lost their homes, family members and their fortunes in a war that would drag on for six more years.

John Adams, who survived to become our second president, wrote to his wife Abigail on July 3, 1776. "I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure that it will cost to maintain this declaration, and support and defend these states; yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means."

An estimated 6,800 Americans were killed in action, 6,100 wounded, 8,000-12,000 died as prisoners of war. Another 17,000 deaths were the result of disease.

Later Adams would write, "Posterity, you will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make a good use of it."

Thomas Paine gave us this timeless warning: "What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value."

How true those words! Many shed their blood and lost their treasure to give us the freedom we now take for granted and so many are anxious to give away for free stuff like health care, which won't be free.

Benjamin Franklin rightly stated, "They who would give up an essential liberty for temporary security, deserve neither liberty or security."

Yes, health care will require raising taxes on the middle class. And by how much if the government provides it not just to citizens, but anyone who wants to cross the border?

It's also important to remember that when you lose the right to control a fair portion of your income, freedom is just an illusion.

Upon exiting the Constitutional Convention, Franklin was asked what sort of government the delegates had created. He answered, "A republic, if you can keep it."

"To be born free is a privilege. To die free is an awesome responsibility." (Anonymous)--
www.wnd.net July 3, 2019

'It's devastating': why fired US police officers frequently get their jobs back

The four Minneapolis officers involved in the killing of George Floyd were swiftly fired after footage of his death went viral.

But that doesn't mean they're permanently losing their badges. Officers in the US are frequently rehired after their termination for misconduct, a problem that experts say increases the likelihood of abuse and killings by police.

Despite the decision on Tuesday to fire the policeman who knelt on Floyd's neck for nine minutes, along with three other officers at the scene, it's uncertain if the officers will face long-term repercussions.

On the contrary, some civil rights advocates warn the men could ultimately avoid legal and financial consequences, continue working in other police departments or even win back their positions.

"The officers are afforded every opportunity to clear their name and regain everything they lost – their reputation, their status and their jobs," said Adanté Pointer, a California lawyer who represents police brutality victims.

Floyd's death on Monday, now under FBI investigation, was the latest example of a black American dying at the hands of a white police officer.

Footage captured Derek Chauvin, an officer, kneeling on top of Floyd, 46, as he lay on the ground shouting "I cannot breathe" and "Don't kill me!" until he became motionless. Bystanders pleaded for Chauvin to stop. Police were responding to a call of a possible forged check.

The footage sparked widespread condemnation and massive protests marked by rubber bullets and teargas. Floyd's family has called for murder charges, though in the US prosecution and conviction of officers is rare, since the law gives officers wide latitude to kill, and prosecutors often have close ties with police.

Prompt termination is also uncommon – and often doesn't last. Officers can appeal firings, typically supported by powerful police unions. The outcome is frequently decided by arbiters in secretive hearings.

A recent analysis by a local Minnesota paper, the Pioneer Press, found arbiters reversed 46% of police terminations in the last five years. Police chiefs across the US have publicly complained that the process forces them to put officers back on the street after firing them for egregious conduct such as unjustified killings, sexual abuse and lying.

If the fired officers in Minneapolis don't win their jobs back, "I think they'll quietly be invited to work in other law enforcement departments", predicted Cat Brooks, an activist in Oakland, where transit police killed Oscar Grant in 2009.

Some police departments also knowingly hire officers who were fired in other jurisdictions, said Roger Goldman, an emeritus law professor at Saint Louis University and expert on police licensing. That's often because the departments are located in smaller cities with tight budgets and can pay a lower salary to an officer who was terminated. "They are so strapped for cash, so they hire you," Goldman said.

The Cleveland officer who was fired after fatally shooting 12-year-old Tamir Rice in 2014 was hired by a small Ohio village police department four years later. His new employer defended the decision, noting the officer was never charged.

The Louisiana officer who killed Alton Sterling in 2016 as he was selling CDs outside a convenience store was eventually fired in 2018. But last year, the city reached a settlement with the officer that retracted the firing and allowed him to resign.

If fired officers were barred from serving as police, "it would help save a lot of lives", Quinetta McMillon, the mother of Sterling's son said.

Sometimes police chiefs unknowingly hire officers with misconduct histories because of laws that allow officers to keep disciplinary records secret. Other times, they aren't running thorough background checks, or they determine an officer's record would not be a liability, said Ben Grunwald, Duke University law professor.

In a study Grunwald co-authored last month for the Yale Law Journal, he found that an average of roughly 1,100 officers working in Florida each year have previously been fired. They tended to move to agencies with

fewer resources and slightly larger communities of color. The fired officers were also twice as likely to be fired a second time compared to officers who have never been fired.

The consequences of this rehiring are severe, said L Chris Stewart, a civil rights attorney based in Atlanta. "If you don't fear losing your job and you know you have all these different immunities that will protect you, you know you will get away with [misconduct]

An attorney for Chauvin did not respond to a request for comment, and the other officers could not be reached.

Some advocates have pushed for a publicly accessible national database that documents officers' disciplinary histories, which could help prevent re-hirings that endanger the public. "You can look up what a doctor has done, what a realtor has done, what you and I have done as members of the public, but you have no way to look into the background of a person with a badge and a gun," said Pointer. Marc McCoy, whose brother Willie McCoy was killed by Vallejo, California police last year, said it was hard when the family learned that the officers involved had previously killed other civilians and been the subject of excessive force complaints. "These laws that you think will lead to the officers' arrest are actually there to protect them," he said. -- theguardian.com 28 May 2020

How Federal Dollars Fund Local Police

Activists protesting police brutality are calling on cities and states to defund their police. Funding for local law enforcement now increasingly comes from the federal government.

The Department of Justice has provided \$14 billion since 1994 to hire and train local police involved in community policing.

Attorney General William Barr has announced the awarding of \$400 million in fiscal year 2020, intended to pay for the hiring of 2,732 police officers in 596 law enforcement agencies.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has pledged to spend \$300 million for the COPS program.

The DoJ also provides funds to states, territories, tribes and local government for law enforcement and corrections programs. According to its website, there was nearly \$264 million available in the 2019 fiscal year.

DOJ has other grants as well, including some for body cameras and "innovative policing techniques."

The Department of Homeland Security has nearly \$1.8 billion available. Localities that receive the funding must agree to allocate at least 25% to law enforcement, under most of the grants.

The Agriculture Department has a grant program. Towns of under 5,000 population can apply for money to construct new police facilities, or in some instances, buy new police cruisers.

And, the Department of Defense provides surplus military equipment to law enforcement agencies, with its so-called 1033 program, which critics have charged has led to the increased militarization of civilian police.

"Federal grant and equipment programs for policing are often designed in ways that incentivize harmful policing and undermine local and state political accountability," says Rachel Harmon, a professor of law at the University of Virginia. Harmon added that such programs "far more often focus on effective policing than ensuring that policing is fair, minimally harmful, or consistent with the law."

-- www.npr.org June 9, 2020

Cliven Bundy Armed Standoff Case Going Back to Court

It's been more than two years since Cliven Bundy left the federal courthouse in Las Vegas a free man.

On Friday, the Justice Department will try to come after the Bundys again, when federal prosecutors will appeal for a retrial over a 2014 armed standoff between Bundy, his militia and federal agents who had come to round up the rancher's cows that were illegally grazing on federal land.

The government's case against Cliven Bundy, his sons, Ammon and Ryan and a Montana militiaman named Ryan Payne, collapsed after a judge declared a mistrial in December 2017. Bundy and his men were accused of conspiracy against federal agents and other charges for their role in the tense standoff which later became a symbol over the fight against federal control of public lands.

"If there is no successful prosecution, it's going to encourage a lot of anarchists like the Bundys to take actions that not only are a threat to themselves but threats to the public at large," said Pat Shea, who served as BLM director during the Clinton administration.

For their part, the Bundys and their supporters appear puzzled that the

federal government is even pursuing a retrial.

"What's really ironic and frankly I think disgusting is that the Trump Justice Department is the one that allowed the U.S. attorney in Nevada to take the appeal," said Larry Klayman, Cliven Bundy's attorney.

After all, President Trump recently pardoned two Oregon ranchers whose fight with federal land managers inspired Ammon Bundy to lead a separate, armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon in 2016.

Federal prosecutors mostly failed to get convictions in that Oregon case and have been widely criticized for bungling the Nevada trial. Judge Gloria Navarro dismissed the case and later declared a mistrial after ruling federal prosecutors "deliberately misled" defense attorneys and the court by failing to provide evidence from surveillance cameras and to disclose the existence of federal snipers near the ranch in the days leading up to the April 2014 standoff.

But court filings indicate prosecutors will likely argue Friday that their missteps in the 2017 trial were "inadvertent," and in particular they say they were trying to balance disclosing Bureau of Land Management surveillance footage with protecting witnesses against violence.

Klayman, who is himself a controversial conservative activist and was once fixture in the "Birther" movement, says the DOJ is being hypocritical. He says the investigation against former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn was recently dropped, but not his clients.

"If you're one of the Washington elite and establishment, you get special treatment," Klayman said. "If you're Cliven Bundy and his sons and the peaceful protesters, basically you don't."

Most of the federal agents and land managers who were at the 2014 standoff say it was anything but a peaceful protest.

Photos and social media posts showed militia training their rifles on armed BLM officers who had come to round up Bundy's cattle. Cliven Bundy has refused to recognize the federal government's ownership of millions of acres of public land — including in Nevada. The rancher has consequently not paid federal fees owed for grazing his cows on land near the Lake Mead National Recreation Area since the 1990s.

Retired federal land managers like Pat Shea have expressed outrage

over the government's continued failure to prosecute the Bundys, whose cows continue to graze — for free — on land that's now protected as a national monument.

The Bundys' original dispute over grazing goes back decades, stemming from tensions between ranchers and environmentalists and the city of Las Vegas, as it began rapidly expanding into a protected desert tortoise's habitat. Bundy was seen as the last rancher in southern Nevada who refused to get out of the business. But in the years since, his critics say the family's fight has devolved into far right extremism, and a widely debunked legal theory that counties and states, not the federal government, should own public land.

"It's like the COVID-19 virus, they mutate as to their belief system so much that you can never tell what they're going to advocate," Shea said. "They are a danger to themselves and a danger to everyone else they come in contact with."

Indeed, the pandemic has lately brought an opportunity to breathe new life to the Bundys and their self-described patriot movement that had been seen as starting to fade. Ammon Bundy and some of the family's followers have been traveling across the West leading protests against coronavirus public health restrictions, protests that thus far haven't drawn huge numbers.

At one recent march in Washington state that was streamed on Facebook, activist Kelli Stewart decried the business closures: "Come on guys, this is the American way, open rebellion to tyrannical laws, we're not slaves."

A rebellious fight against tyranny, or justice against a family that has flaunted the law for decades, that's a question now before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The court takes up the appeal for a retrial in *USA vs. Bundy* in a virtual session on Friday. — npr.org May 29, 2020

A look at the antifa movement Trump is blaming for violence

What is ANTIFA?

Short for "anti-fascists" antifa is not a single organization but rather an umbrella term for far-left leaning militant groups that confront or resist neo-Nazis and white supremacists at demonstrations.

There is no hierarchical structure to antifa or universal set of tactics that makes its presence immediately recognizable, though members tend to espouse revolutionary

and anti-authoritarian views, said Mark Bray, a historian at Rutgers University and author of "Antifa: the Anti-fascist Handbook."

Antifa literature encourages followers to pursue lawful protest activity as well as more confrontational acts, according to a 2018 Congressional Research Service report.

Followers are advised to monitor the activities of white supremacist groups, publicize online the personal information of perceived enemies, develop self-defense training regimens and compel outside organizations to cancel any speakers or events with "a fascist bent," the report said.

Antifa has been present at demonstrations and counter-demonstrations over the past three years, sometimes involving brawls and property damage.

They mobilized against a white supremacist march in Charlottesville, VA in 2017 and have clashed repeatedly with far-right groups in Portland, OR, including a counter-demonstration last summer that resulted in arrests and the seizure of shields, poles and other weapons.

Pres. Trump has singled out antifa as being responsible for the violence at protests triggered by the killing of George Floyd, a black man who died in police custody in Minneapolis.

AG William Barr said antifa was engaging in "domestic terrorism" and would be dealt with accordingly.

Bray said. "It is difficult to establish how big of a role they're playing since there is no official roster of members and since the movement lacks the numbers to mobilize nationwide in such a dramatic, forceful way. The radical left is much bigger than antifa and the number of people who are participating in the property destruction are much, much bigger than the radical left," Bray said. -- mainichi.jp June 2, 2020

Rightwing vigilantes on armed patrol after fake rumours of antifa threat

False social media rumors about so-called antifa activists traveling into rural areas have led rightwing vigilantes to carry out armed patrols in the western United States and beyond.

Since Donald Trump tweeted that antifa would be declared a terrorist group, the term has gained broader currency on the American right and is seen as a dire threat. In fact, it simply means "anti-fascist" and is used to describe a wide spectrum of leftist and

anarchist groups and individuals. It has no existence as a separate organization.

The FBI has said there is no evidence of antifa involvement in violence linked to the Floyd protests.

But in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho groups of 30-50 men armed with semi-automatic weapons have occupied downtown streets on successive evenings this week, guarding against supposed busloads of radical leftists rumored to traveling from Spokane or Seattle.

A gallery posted to Facebook by a local photographer who has supported rightwing causes showed some of the armed men bear the insignia of conservative militia groups such as the Three Percenters, and the Fallen Saints, a motorcycle club made up of veterans and active duty soldiers. Also in the town of just over 50,000 residents, almost five hours' drive from Seattle, storekeepers were reportedly boarding up shop windows ahead of an antifa influx that never came, and for which there was no evidence.

Similar rumors have led to threats to young activists, and proposals that armed vigilantes mount downtown rooftops in Sonora, California, when a local protest condemning the death of Floyd was being planned.

A crowd of about 100 local residents is addressed by a succession of speakers associated with the secessionist and pro-militia "State of Jefferson" movement, which seeks to carve out a new state in northern California and southern Oregon, and militia groups like the Oath Keepers and the Northern California militia.

Organizers of the Floyd protest in Sonora, meanwhile, passed on evidence of social media threats, and said that their cars were followed in the nights leading up to the event. Similar rumors have animated large demonstrations or counter-protests by armed vigilantes in many cities around the country including Snohomish, Washington; Sandpoint, Idaho; and Bentonville, Arkansas.

In Forks, Washington, a family of four campers were harassed by locals who thought they were outside agitators and trees were cut down to form an impromptu roadblock, trapping them in their campsite.

Lindsay Schubiner, the program director at the progressive Western States Center, said: "Far-right and anti-government groups are eagerly helping spread misinformation about anti-fascist protesters gathering in local communities."

-- theguardian.com June 6, 2020

Special report: Meet the masters of social distancing

By Joshua Schneyer

SOMEWHERE NEAR RESERVE,
New Mexico

Wendell and Mariann Hardy lived most of their lives in Tucson, Arizona. But each was drawn to solitude. Even before they met, both relocated to log cabins in the Catalinas range that overlooks Tucson. Still, city types came up to party there on the weekends. It wasn't isolated enough.

Few people are as accustomed to the rigors, or rewards, of sheltering-in-place as Wendell, 75, and Mariann, 69. After their 1985 wedding, they explored the wildest reaches of the American West for a place to be on their own.

Their search ended in Catron County, NM. It is bigger than some U.S. states. Elk outnumber people 4 to 1. The county doesn't have a single stoplight. Some children wait for the school bus in wood and wire cages as a precaution against wolves.

Miles down a washed-out dirt road along the San Francisco River, they bought 25 acres for \$40,000, on land, 6,000 feet high bordering on a National Forest.

Today, an iron sign above their front gate reads "El Medio de Nada." Spanish for the middle of nowhere.

"If you can get along with your wife out here, that's about it. There are no neighbors," Wendell says. "I wake up happy every morning."

During the worst public health crisis in a century, most would have turned a reporter away. I told them I wanted to tell the story of a couple who'd mastered social distancing, striking a balance between solitude and togetherness, self-reliance and dependence.

So they invited me to spend two days with them in El Medio de Nada.

The pandemic, and the isolation it encourages, is already sparking signs of a modest urban exodus toward wilder areas. U.S. demand for recreational vehicles has surged, along with home rentals in far-flung locales.

Driving down empty roads toward the Hardys, I had conceived of their existence as a kind of Walden of the West, fashioned after the 19th century treatise on self-sufficiency by Henry David Thoreau. From his perch on Walden Pond, Thoreau championed solitude as a way to live life to the fullest.

In society, he wrote, "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

It struck me that Wendell and Mariann had taken things to an extreme Thoreau, after all, only experimented with isolation on Walden Pond for two years, taking his dirty laundry home for his mother to wash.

The Hardy's solar-powered home is entirely off grid. It took two years to build the fence around their land that keeps hunters out. An 8 feet high fence around the orchard is not so much to deter people as elk. The 28-foot logs that make up the home took months to skin and put in place. Many of the steel fixtures around the property are from tennis court light poles the couple scrounged from a Tucson country club.

They're able to get by on very little: a pension and some savings.

They sometimes go months without venturing into the nearest town, Reserve, population 300, for bacon from Jake's grocery, or a visit with grandkids. (Wendell's daughter from a prior marriage.)

The couple did no panic buying as the pandemic hit. Their root cellar – a buried shipping container accessed through an outhouse with a battery-powered elevator – is stocked like an underground Walmart. The nearest actual Walmart? A **three**-hour drive.

The social-distancing rules in effect almost everywhere else have little bearing on them. They're grateful for that, but no less concerned for family members, or for the rest of us.

Mariann has found solace in a daily virtual mass led by the local priest in Reserve, who's from Nigeria. "I feel the need to pray for people during this pandemic," she says.

While most people long for isolation to end, this dark chapter for society has reminded Wendell and Mariann of a quandary of their own.

Can we get through this period and still live in the way we choose?

What got them this far, they say, was an unwillingness to have anyone else prescribe how they should live, or die. But the couple didn't always consider how hard it would be to get old here.

Both have needed a wheelchair at times. Mariann's knees are shot. Either of them could slip in their clawfoot bathtub. The what-ifs are endless and hard to plan for.

"I know that Wendell's wishes are to live his days out here," she says. "We're going to try. We've already followed each other to the end of the earth." --Reuters June 5, 2020

The 13 Best Movies On Why You Shouldn't Trust The Government

By David Sims

Hollywood, especially beginning in the '60s, has depicted United States leadership and its intelligence apparatus as shadowy and villainous with greater daring over the decades. Some of the best paranoid thrillers and conspiratorial dramas of the past 50 years were initially dismissed as fantastical genre pieces by critics, seen as little more than popcorn entertainment. But even the most outlandish of these works have a grain of truth to them. Their deep suspicion of the apparatus of power stemmed from real scandals engulfing the U.S., or from rumors of government involvement in assassinations and overseas wars that could never be fully dismissed. What follows are some of the best cinematic efforts that capture that wary mood over the years, arranged chronologically to chart how filmmakers' brashness waxed and waned over the decades.

* The Manchurian Candidate (1962)

* Seven Days in May (1964)

* Z (1969)

* The Parallax View (1974)

* The Conversation (1974)

* Three Days of the Condor (1974)

* Marathon Man (1976)

* Blow Out (1981)

* Nixon (1995)

* Absolute Power (1997)

* Wag the Dog (1997)

* The X-Files (1998)

* Enemy of the State (1998)

-- The Atlantic June 5, 2020

Trump's Bump Stock Ban Is Under Fire from His Own Judicial Nominees

After 2017's mass shooting in Las Vegas, Pres. Trump vowed to ban bump stocks, a type of firearm accessory that the shooter reportedly used. "We can do that with an executive order," Trump declared.

DOJ lawyers came up with a new Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives regulation "to clarify that [bump stocks] are 'machineguns'" because "such devices allow a shooter of a semiautomatic r to initiate a continuous firing cycle with a single pull of the trigger."

That unilateral executive action has now come under fire from two judges appointed by Trump himself.

On March 2, Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch said the executive branch "used to tell everyone that bump stocks don't qualify as 'machine guns'"

Now it says the opposite....Why should courts...defer to such bureaucratic pirouetting?"

On March 30, judge Brantley Starr of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, issued a blistering opinion in Lane v. U.S that basically accused the DOJ of ignoring foundational constitutional principles in its defense to Trump's bum stock ban.

The Justice Department justified the ban as a lawful exercise of the "federal police power." But "the federal government forgot that Tenth Amendment and the structure of the Constitution itself," which grants no such power to the feds. It is concerning that the federal government believes it swallowed the states whole. Assuming the federal government didn't abolish the states to take their police power," Starr wrote, he had no choice but to deny the government's motion to dismiss the case. He then tartly added, The Court will allow the government to try again and explain which enumerated power justifies the federal regulation."

-- Reason July 2020

Christian Proclamation

To the Governor of NJ Philip Murphy and the entire body of New Jersey

We the Christians of New Jersey admonish you starting January 1, 2021 and for the entire month of January and every January there after, it be declared Christian pride month. We expect that you will quickly enact this request so as to find favor in the eyes of our Lord. We regret this proclamation has not been made sooner. However, we trust that the Lord will guide your mind and understanding in realizing the importance of this act. We trust it will be your desire to do this, that the Lord will say to you well done my good and faithful servant in you I am well pleased.

* * *

To the entire body of Christ in NJ
May 28, 2020

We ask that you read this letter and encourage you congregants to contact the Governor and their State representatives (Assembly and Senators) to quickly enact this proclamation. I trust it is your desire to bring Glory and Honor to our Lord. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Figueroa @609-954-6429.

Please use any and all Social Media you have to spread this out to the entire state. The Lord would be pleased to make this a national proclamation as well.

Thank you and God bless,
Bob Figueroa

End Qualified Immunity

Last week, Libertarian Congressman Justin Amash introduced the **Ending Qualified Immunity Act** to eliminate qualified immunity and restore Americans' ability to obtain relief when police officers violate their constitutionally secured rights.

As part of the Civil Rights Act of 1871, Congress allowed individuals to sue state and local officials, including police officers, who violate their rights. Starting in 1967 however, the Supreme Court began gutting that law by inventing the doctrine of qualified immunity. Under qualified immunity, **police are immune from liability** unless the person whose rights they violated can show that there is a previous case in the same jurisdiction, involving the exact same facts, in which a court deemed the actions to be a constitutional violation.

This rule has sharply narrowed the situations in which police can be held liable – even for truly heinous rights violations - and it creates a disincentive to bringing cases in the first place. If a victim knows there is no prior case that is identical to theirs, they may decline to even file a lawsuit because they are very unlikely to win. Even if a victim does file a case, **a judge may dismiss it on qualified immunity grounds** and decline to decide whether the plaintiff's rights were violated, meaning the constitutional precedent still isn't established and so the next victim still can't recover. This can create a permanent procedural roadblock for victims, preventing them from obtaining damages for having their rights violated.

Qualified immunity was created by the Supreme Court. It is time for us to correct their mistake.

-- Libertarian Party bulletin June 17, 2020

To: All Who Care about Liberty

From Mark Stewart Greenstein

If you are an aggrieved customer of a "non-essential" worker and have yet to join a lawsuit against your state's authorities denying you equal protection, please consider it. You can join one of mine, which is against my Connecticut Health Officials, and against NY Governor Andrew Cuomo. Both are on 14th Amendment grounds....

Claim is 14th Amendment "equal protection" violation. AND 14th Amendment abridgement of Privileges of U.S. citizens.

"Non-essential businesses and workers" are being deprived of their 14th amendment rights, by STATE action.

Customers of these businesses are less directly discriminated against.

There is also 1st Amendment restriction on Religion and peaceable assembly.

90 years ago, we'd have very good cases. Now, judicial deference makes this thin, but worth fighting. 90 years ago we wouldn't be witnessing governments roll us up. Herbert Hoover and FDR never shut down businesses. My related-to-presidential history piece from this morning is attached.

Just state how you as a business-person, an employee, a customer, or a churchgoer have been aggrieved by state action. I'm taking names (you need not give any more info than this at this stage)..

-- libertymsg@gmail.com May 31, 2020

Gun background checks smash records during coronavirus fears

By Lisa Marie Pane

Background checks required to buy firearms have spiked to record numbers in the past month, fueled by Americans worried about their safety during the new coronavirus crisis.

According to figures from the FBI, 3.7 million background checks were done in March — the most for a single month since the system began in 1998.

The spikes started with the nation's first recorded death on Feb. 29.

The overwhelming majority of buyers over the past month have been first-time gun owners, the National Shooting Sports Foundation said. That worries gun-control advocates, who fear first-time buyers will not be able to get the training to safely handle and store their new weapons.

Experts say the numbers have been fueled by a typical concern that a potential Democratic president would institute greater restrictions.

The soaring numbers come amid debate about whether gun shops should be considered essential businesses that can remain open during stay-at-home orders meant to reduce the spread of the virus. Over the weekend, the Trump administration issued an advisory classifying firearms

dealers as essential but did not mandate that states keep them open.

The gun lobby has pushed back vigorously in places that determined federally licensed gun dealers are not essential during the outbreak and should close. The industry says the shops are critical to allowing Americans to exercise their constitutional rights.

The Texas attorney general issued a legal opinion saying emergency orders shuttering gun shops are unconstitutional. That's in contrast to some cities, such as New Orleans, where the mayor has issued an emergency proclamation declaring the authority to restrict sales of firearms and ammunition.

In Los Angeles, Sheriff Alex Villanueva has twice ordered gun shops in the nation's most populous county to close, leading to legal challenges from gun lobbying groups, including the National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Second Amendment Foundation.

-- AP April 2, 2020

FBI Is Playing Games With Gun Background Checks

By Former Rep. Bob Barr

Since 1998 when the National Background Check System, or "NICS," became operational, the FBI has completed hundreds of millions of background checks on prospective gun purchasers; 28.4 million last year alone.

NICS permits the FBI to place a "three business day" "hold" on a prospective firearm purchase, in order to allow the Bureau time to determine if a particular purchaser falls within one of the several categories of persons not permitted to possess a gun.

(Most inquiries submitted to the FBI by firearms dealers (Federal Firearms Licensees or "FFLs") are approved or denied almost immediately).

The hold period is defined as days in which "state offices are open", so as not to box the FBI into having to resolve the potential problem with a purchaser's background on a Friday before a three-day holiday.

Since the announcements of COVID-19 "state of emergency" decrees, FFLs have been receiving

notices from the FBI that certain transactions are delayed not for three business days, which is the maximum the law allows, but for 30 days or even longer.

There is *no* provision in federal law permitting the Bureau to extend any "hold" beyond three business days.

The FBI may be interpreting the pandemic-based emergency decrees in effect in every state as constituting days in which state government offices are not "open." If so, this is a subterfuge. State offices in all 50 states remain open, albeit under limiting guidelines set by the federal government and by individual state governors.

Moreover, NICS checks are valid only for 30 days, so a retailer who obeys a 30-day (or even longer) hold and receives no denial during that time, places the purchaser in the position of having to come back and start the process all over again in a potential never-ending loop.

-- dailycaller.com/2020/04/20

John Lott: Concealed-permit gun holders save lives

The attack on the West Freeway Church of Christ reminds us of an important truth that too many still deny:

Concealed-permit gun holders save lives.

Within seconds of the shooter opening fire on the Texas congregation, he was shot dead by two parishioners with concealed handgun permits. The attacker killed two congregants, but the death toll could have been much higher.

"Today evil walked boldly among us," Tarrant County Sheriff Bill Waybourn said. "Let me remind you, good people raised up and stopped it before it got worse."

When Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed a law making it easier for people to carry guns into places of worship, former Vice President Joe Biden criticized the action. "It is irrational, with all due respect to the governor of Texas, it is irrational what they're doing on the same day you see a mass shooting ... and we're talking about loosening access to have guns," Biden said.

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